

It is clear that consolidating media can be a dangerous thing. Take the example of Sinclair Broadcasting trying now to force all their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line of the large company and less of what we need of the objective and many faceted programming that strengthens a democracy. And the more stations a corporation is allowed to own, the wider they are able to distribute narrow partisan propaganda.

Sinclair needs to pay for political advertising as any individual would have to do. They need to somehow pay for all the programming time they now seek to preempt for anti-Kerry programming. They are so "big" they do not even feel they need to answer the phone for concerned individuals. I can't register a complaint with them, because they do not respond.

I personally want TV programming cover real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter. Locally owned companies accountable to local constituencies care about what their constituencies think and need.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.